

IN THE CLAIMS:

1-24. (Cancelled)

25. (New) A vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization, comprising:

an accommodating section for accommodating an endoscope having a flexible inserting portion and an operating portion for performing high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization, the accommodating section being able to accommodate the flexible inserting portion of the endoscope in a bent state; and

a guide member for guiding a bending direction of the flexible inserting portion when the endoscope is accommodated in the accommodating section, the guide member bending the flexible inserting portion such as to be spatially separate from the operating portion in order to prevent the inserting portion and the operating portion of the endoscope to contact with each other.

26. (New) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 25, wherein the guide member is a groove portion formed in the accommodating section.

27. (New) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 26, wherein the guide member is provided such as to position the inserting portion of the endoscope, and includes a flexible restricting member which largely deforms from the inserting portion in response to a predetermined external force.

28. (New) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 25, wherein the guide member is a lid member covering a part where the

operating portion of the endoscope is accommodated in the accommodating section, the lid member having a first side facing the accommodating section when the lid member covers the accommodating section and a second side opposite to the first side for placing the inserting portion of the endoscope.

29. (New) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 28, further comprising an outer lid to cover the lid member after the lid member has covered the accommodating section.

30. (New) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 25, wherein the accommodating section includes a substantially planar surface formed in the surface that is in contact with the flexible inserting portion of the endoscope.

31. (New) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 25, wherein the accommodating section has a partition member for accommodating others than the endoscope separate from the endoscope.

32. (New) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 25, wherein the guide member is a cylindrical member which can be accommodated in the accommodating section together with the endoscope in a state in which the flexible inserting portion of the endoscope is inserted.

33. (New) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 25, wherein the guide member is a partition which is provided in the accommodating section such as to be positioned between the flexible inserting portion and the

operating portion of the endoscope when the flexible inserting portion of the endoscope is accommodated in the accommodating section in a state in which it is bent.

34. (New) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 25, wherein the guide member guides the flexible portion of the endoscope so as to have it bent in the direction of the operating portion of the endoscope.